

## The Group Engagement Model: Procedural Justice, Social Identity, and Cooperative Behavior

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*The group engagement model expands the insights of the group-value model of procedural justice and the relational model of authority into an explanation for why procedural justice shapes cooperation in groups, organizations, and societies. It hypothesizes that procedures are important because they shape people's social identity within groups, and social identity in turn influences attitudes, values, and behaviors. The model further hypothesizes that resource judgments exercise their influence indirectly by shaping social identity. This social identity mediation hypothesis explains why people focus on procedural justice, and in particular on procedural elements related to the quality of their interpersonal treatment, because those elements carry the most social identity-relevant information. In this article, we review several key insights of the group engagement model, relate these insights to important trends in psychological research on justice, and discuss implications of the model for the future of procedural justice research.*

The original goal of social justice research was to demonstrate the power of justice judgments to shape people's thoughts, feelings, and actions (Tyler, 2000; Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997; Tyler & Smith, 1997). Justice studies have, in fact, continually provided strong and consistent demonstrations of support for this basic justice hypothesis. Justice has an impact; it is substantial in magnitude; it is consistently found across a wide variety of group and organizational contexts; and it is distinct from judgments of self-interest or personal/group gain. This conclusion suggests that information about justice is central to people's evaluations of social situations (Tyler et al., 1997; van den Bos & Lind, 2002).

Justice research has evolved a great deal in the process of developing these insights about the role of justice in social contexts. Numerous models related to the justice phenomena have been proposed. Some of these continue to shape the face of justice research today, whereas others have fallen into relative obscurity by their inability to withstand empirical scrutiny. All have contributed to the history of justice research.

In this article, we put forth a theoretical model that develops from the findings of earlier models and shifts in the focus of justice research. Specifically, we present theory and research on our *group engagement model*, which draws together the insights of the group-value model of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988) and the relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992) and extends them to understand the antecedents of cooperation in groups (Tyler & Blader, 2000). The argument underlying the group engagement model is that people's focus on procedural justice sheds light on their motivations for engaging in groups, and thus the model explicitly posits what those motivations are. In so doing, it contributes to our understanding of what people are seeking when they involve themselves in groups and the importance of justice in social settings. The model also suggests some innovative directions for future research.

Because it is important to understand the past to evaluate new theories and models, we preview our presentation of the model by a discussion of major shifts in justice research and how they are addressed by the group engagement model. We also explicitly distinguish the group engagement model from earlier models that contributed to its development, and then provide a more in-depth treatment of the model and the propositions it raises for future research.

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## The History of Social Justice Research

### The Shift From Distributive to Procedural Justice

Early research on justice focused on the argument that people's feelings and behaviors in social interactions flow from their assessments of the fairness of their outcomes when dealing with others (distributive fairness). This hypothesis was widely supported. In particular, experimental studies showed that people were most satisfied when outcomes were distributed fairly (Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978). What was most striking and provocative about these results were the adverse reactions by those who received more than they felt they deserved; people did not react well to being 'over-benefited.' This finding suggested that people will give up resources and accept less when they believe doing so is fair.

Despite the impressive findings of early studies of distributive justice, the focus of attention among justice researchers has increasingly shifted away from studying only distributive justice to a focus on people's distributive and procedural justice concerns. A number of factors have driven this shift. First, research shows that distributive justice judgments are often biased (e.g., Messick & Sentis, 1985; Ross & Sicoly, 1979; Thompson & Loewenstein, 1992). This limits the utility of distributive justice as a construct, because people will often see themselves as deserving more favorable outcomes than others see them as deserving. As a result, people frequently cannot be given what they feel they deserve, and distributive justice has not proven as useful in resolving group conflicts as was initially hoped.

A greater focus on procedural justice issues was also driven by later studies that looked simultaneously at the impact of distributive and procedural justice judgments and found a predominant influence of procedural justice on people's reactions in groups (Alexander & Ruderman, 1987; Tyler & Caine, 1981). These studies, conducted in settings in which people had information about both distributive and procedural justice, found that procedural justice judgments play the major role in shaping people's reactions to their personal experiences. More recent research echoes these findings about the relative impact of procedural and distributive justice concerns (Tyler & Blader, 2000). In addition, people who were asked to talk about personal experiences of injustice were found to talk primarily about procedural issues, in particular about being treated with a lack of respect when dealing with others (Messick, Bloom, Boldizar, & Samuelson, 1985; Mikula, Petri, & Tanzer, 1990).

Justice research has followed the path outlined by this evidence because it finds that the primary impact on people comes from their judgments about the fairness of procedures (see Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, &

Huo, 1997; Tyler & Smith, 1997). This does not mean, of course, that people no longer study distributive justice, but that there is a particularly strong focus in current research on issues of procedural justice. This focus is embodied in the group engagement model by the key role it accords to procedural justice.

### The Focus on Treatment Issues in Definitions of Procedural Justice

A second important shift in justice research has been a change in how procedural justice is defined. Early work on procedural justice was guided by the influential research program of Thibaut and Walker (1975). Thibaut and Walker centered their procedural justice studies on procedures as mechanisms for making decisions about the allocation of outcomes. In particular, they focused on formal procedures that related to decision-making processes in legal settings. So Thibaut and Walker linked their discussions of procedures primarily to issues of decision making, and in particular to issues of decision making about allocation decisions. Because their procedural models were rooted in an era in which distributive justice dominated, their focus was natural. This context also influenced their theory development, because they linked people's desire for fair procedures to their desire to achieve equitable outcomes. They proposed that people value procedural justice (operationalized in their research as voice or process control) because it facilitates decision makers' ability to make equitable judgments. In other words, procedures are valued insofar as they affect the outcomes that are associated with them.

This focus on decision making in allocation contexts is no longer true of procedural justice research. Researchers have increasingly moved their attention away from an exclusive focus on the decision-making function of procedures to include more attention to the interpersonal aspects of procedures. Those interpersonal aspects of procedures arise because procedures are settings within which people are involved in a social interaction with one another. This is true regardless of whether the procedure involves bargaining, a market exchange, team interaction among equals, or a third party procedure with a decision maker, such as mediation or a trial.

In social interactions there is considerable variation in the manner in which people treat one another. They can act politely, rudely, respectfully, with hostility, and so on. These aspects of the interpersonal experience of a procedure—which occur in the context of an interaction whose overt purpose is to make a decision to allocate resources or resolve a conflict—may also influence those who are involved.

An example of this shift from an exclusive focus on decision making to a focus that includes attention to the interpersonal quality of the interaction can be found in

the literature on voice or process control. In the early work of Thibaut and Walker (1975), the opportunity to present evidence was linked to the desire to influence the decisions made by third party decision makers. The value of the opportunity to speak was directly related to their estimate of how much influence they had over the decision maker. Consequently, in this research people were not asked about whether they were treated politely and with dignity by the decision maker.

However, later studies of voice suggested that having the opportunity for “voice” had interpersonal or “value-expressive” worth that was not linked to any influence over the decisions made (Tyler, 1987). These studies showed that people still rated a procedure to be more fair if they had voice, even if they knew that what they said had little or no influence on the decisions made (Tyler, Rasinski, & Spodick, 1985). This was true even when the opportunity for voice came after the decision was already made (Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990). These findings suggest that voice has value beyond its ability to shape decision-making processes and outcomes.

What factors are driving the influence of voice, even when it clearly cannot affect the eventual outcome or decision? If an authority listens to people’s arguments, we might hypothesize that people think that the authority is conferring interpersonal respect on that person. This argument was supported by the finding that people only value such voice opportunities if they feel that the authority is “considering” their arguments (Tyler, 1987). This suggests that people were focused on whether or not they had their concerns and needs in the situation treated respectfully by the decision maker, independently of whether or not the course of action they recommend to resolve those concerns was adopted.

Other research on people’s procedural justice concerns directly measured people’s focus on the quality of their interpersonal treatment (“standing” or “status recognition”), and found that it had an effect that was distinct from their interest in the fairness of decision-making judgments. Drawing on these findings, the relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992) explicitly included issues of interpersonal treatment within the framework of procedural justice concerns. The relational model, therefore, directly recognized the importance of interpersonal treatment. Subsequent studies confirm that issues of interpersonal treatment or standing independently shape procedural justice judgments (Tyler, 1988, 1994; Tyler & Huo, 2002).

These interpersonal aspects of procedures have been found by recent studies to be so powerful in their impact that some researchers have argued that they might potentially be treated as a separate type of “interactional” justice (Bies & Moag, 1986; Tyler & Bies, 1990). Regardless of whether the quality of the treatment that people experience via procedures is actually considered a distinct form of justice (see Blader & Tyler, 2003a, 2003b), justice researchers have again followed their

findings about what impacts the people they study. This has led them to increasingly turn their research toward exploring interpersonal or interactional aspects of procedures—which are reflected in judgments about the quality of one’s treatment by others.

The group engagement model not only incorporates this shift in the focus of how justice is defined—by incorporating quality of treatment issues—but also provides a framework for understanding why this class of procedural criteria has the impact that it does.

### **Moving From Anger and Negative Behaviors to Positive Attitudes–Values and Cooperative Behaviors**

Early research on justice was rooted in the literature on relative deprivation, a literature whose origins lie in efforts to understand and explain riots and rebellion (Crosby, 1976; Gurr, 1970). This focus on negative attitudes and behaviors continued in later efforts to understand distributive influences on pay dissatisfaction, employee theft, sabotage and turnover, and procedural effects on resistance to third-party decisions (Tyler & Smith, 1997). However, recent research on procedural justice has increasingly focused on more prosocial outcomes, such as how to build trust, encourage responsibility and obligation, generate intrinsic motivation and creativity, and stimulate voluntary cooperation with others (Tyler & Blader, 2000). Similarly, there has been increasing attention to exploring when justice motivations encourage people to provide resources to the disadvantaged (Montada, 1995). Interestingly, this shift is consistent with a shift that has been taking place within psychological research more generally (Snyder & Lopez, 2002).

This broadening of the focus of justice research is consistent with the group engagement argument that justice theories provide a basis for understanding people’s general relationship to groups. That includes both people’s negative reactions to injustice and the ability of justice to motivate engagement and cooperation. Society, after all, does not just want people not to riot or destroy. It also wants them to be happy, creative, and productive.

### **Models of the Psychology of Justice**

While continually supporting the basic importance of people’s justice judgments, these shifts in focus have resulted in a dramatic change in the character of justice research since the 1960s. In fact, early justice researchers might have trouble recognizing many recent justice studies as being about justice—at least as they originally understood that construct. Instead of viewing justice as residing in the rules used in the distribution of resources in a group, justice is more recently viewed as being strongly linked to quality of treatment issues, such as

treating people with politeness and dignity in social interactions. It is also focused on stimulating commitment and cooperation, rather than minimizing anger and destructive behaviors.

We argue that these changes—which were guided by the empirical results of justice research—can best be understood by considering the psychological dynamics underlying justice. That is, they can be explained by considering the psychological processes that lead people to react to issues of justice or injustice when they are dealing with others. Much early justice research was focused on showing that justice matters, that is, on demonstrating that people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are shaped by their justice judgments, suggesting that information about justice is central to people’s evaluations of social situations (Tyler et al., 1997; van den Bos & Lind, 2002). However, to develop a deeper understanding of why these effects emerge—and why the shifts in research focus we have outlined have occurred—we need to pay attention to the psychology underlying justice.

Several models have been proposed to understand the psychology underlying procedural justice. We will be focusing here on a set of models that share an emphasis on the relational implications of justice evaluations. These models represent a significant systematic research program designed to understand the psychology of justice. In particular, we will be presenting our group engagement model, which integrates the insights of the earlier group value (Lind & Tyler, 1988) and relational models (Tyler & Lind, 1992) and extends those insights into an explanation for why procedural justice shapes cooperation in groups, organizations, and societies. The relationship among these three models is shown in Table 1.

The models differ first in their focus. The group-value model focuses on the antecedents of judgments of procedural justice. The relational model explores the factors shaping reactions to authorities. The models also differ in their predictions. The group-value model predicts that noninstrumental factors will influence procedural justice judgments, a prediction confirmed both by findings of noninstrumental voice effects (Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990; Tyler, 1987), and by demonstrations that people care more about issues

of procedural justice when dealing with members of their own groups (Tyler, 1999). The relational model predicts that procedural justice will influence reactions to authorities, as has been subsequently found by studies of legal, political, managerial, familial, and educational authorities (Tyler & Smith, 1997). It further predicts that relational concerns—in particular neutrality, trustworthiness, and status recognition—will influence procedural justice judgments, an argument supported by a number of studies (Tyler, 1989, 1994; Tyler, DeGoey, & Smith, 1996).

How does the group engagement model differ from these earlier, empirically supported models? First, the group engagement model is broader in its scope. The objective of the model is to identify and examine the antecedents of attitudes, values, and cooperative behavior in groups. Hence, the group engagement model broadens the focus of justice studies and its predecessor models of justice by positing a general model of the relationship between people and groups. In trying to understand the precursors of people’s engagement in their groups, it identifies and examines a much broader set of variables—and dynamics between those variables—than earlier justice models.

Second, several new ideas and hypotheses flow from the group engagement model. It predicts that identity judgments will be the primary factors shaping attitudes, values, and cooperative behaviors in groups. Second, it predicts that resource judgments will most strongly influence attitudes, values, and discretionary cooperative behaviors in groups through their indirect influence on identity judgments, rather than directly. Third, it predicts that the primary antecedent of identity judgments will be judgments about the procedural justice of the group. Fourth, it predicts that status judgments about pride and respect will shape identification with the group. Each of these novel predictions is elaborated on in the next section.

### The Group Engagement Model

As noted, the key objective of the group engagement model is to understand what shapes the relation-

**Table 1.** *Comparison of Models of Procedural Justice*

Model	Focus of Concern	Value Added by Model
Group-value model	Procedural justice judgments	Noninstrumental factors influence judgments about procedural justice
Relational model	Authority relations, leadership	Procedural justice shapes reactions to authorities Relational concerns (neutrality, trustworthiness, standing and status recognition) shape judgments about procedural justice
Group engagement model	Attitudes, values, and cooperative behavior in groups	Identity judgments directly shape attitudes, values, and cooperative behavior Resource judgments influence attitudes values, and discretionary cooperative behavior primarily through their influence on identity judgments Procedural justice shapes identity judgments Pride and respect influence identification with the group

ship that people form with their groups. People have considerable discretion about the degree to which they invest themselves in their groups by working on behalf of the group. To examine this issue, the group engagement model distinguishes between two classes of cooperative behavior: mandatory and discretionary. Mandatory cooperation is behavior that is stipulated by the group, whereas discretionary cooperation originates with the group member. The model argues that each of these forms of cooperation is differently motivated. Of the two, mandatory behaviors are more strongly affected by incentives and sanctions, because they are behaviors required by the group and thus the group specifically structures incentives and sanctions to encourage these behaviors. Discretionary behaviors are more strongly under the influence of people's internal motivations (their attitudes and values), because they are behaviors that originate with the individual. Because discretionary cooperative behaviors are especially valuable to groups (see Tyler & Blader, 2000), the precursors of such behavior are especially central to discussions of the motivation of group members.

Further, people do not only have leeway with how they act on behalf of their groups. They also have discretion in the degree to which they hold positive attitudes and values toward the group. Attitudes can serve as internal motivations that encourage people to engage in behaviors that benefit the group and that they find personally rewarding (i.e., behaviors they "want" to do). Values are feelings of responsibility that shape people's sense of behaviors that they should do (i.e., behaviors they "ought" to do), and can thus also serve as internal motivations. For instance, they may reflect feelings of responsibility and obligation to follow group rules and the orders of group leaders. They can be rooted in either their moral values or their views about the legitimacy of group rules and authorities, both of which are at the discretion and control of the individual group member.

Both attitudes and values are important because they lead people to be internally motivated to engage in and cooperate with the group. To the degree that people are internally motivated, they engage in cooperative behaviors for personal reasons, and they do not need to receive incentives (rewards) or to face the risk of sanctions (punishments) to encourage their group-related behaviors. This benefits groups, which are then free to deploy their assets in other ways that benefit the group.

Understanding how people negotiate this latitude in how they think, feel, and act toward the group is important for understanding the psychology that drives people in group settings. To address this issue, the group engagement model contrasts two social psychological–motivational models concerning the reasons that people have for engaging in groups. These models are the resource-based social exchange model (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Rusbult & Van Lange, 1996; Thibaut &

Kelley, 1959) and the identity-based social identity model (Hogg & Abrams, 1988).

The group engagement model argues that groups benefit when the people within them engage themselves in the group, and groups are particularly benefited when that engagement is based on internal motivations because cooperation does not then depend on the ability of the group to utilize incentives or sanctions. This leaves open the question of how to best encourage such internal motivation. We address that issue in the next section, in which we compare the two social psychological–motivational models outlined previously and their linkages to cooperation.

### **The Influence of Identity and Resource Motivations on Engagement in Groups**

The group engagement model contrasts two potentially important aspects of groups, either or both of which might shape group member's cooperation and engagement: the group's identity implications for the person within the group (Hogg & Abrams, 1988) and the resources that the person gains and loses from group membership, in either absolute terms or relative to what is available in other groups (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

The group engagement model selects among these two aspects of groups and argues that the central reason that people engage themselves in groups is because they use the feedback they receive from those groups to create and maintain their identities. In other words, the group engagement model hypothesizes that, of the two types of motivations, it is the development and maintenance of a favorable identity that most strongly influences cooperation. The model predicts that people's willingness to cooperate with their group—especially cooperation that is discretionary in nature—flows from the identity information they receive from the group. That identity information, in turn, is hypothesized to emanate from evaluations of the procedural fairness experienced in the group. This suggests that identity evaluations and concerns mediate the relationship between justice judgments and group engagement. We will refer to this as the *social identity mediation hypothesis*.

Why might this be so? Using social identity theory as our framework, we argue that an important function of groups is to provide people with a way of constructing a social identity. It is widely recognized that groups shape people's definitions of themselves and their feelings of well-being and self-worth (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001). In particular, group memberships shape people's conceptions of their social selves—the aspect of the self that is formed through identification with groups. Groups help to define who people are and help them to evaluate their status. The first part of this process involves social categorization, the taking on of the categories that define one's group and using them to construct one's self-im-

age. The second part of the process involves linking views about self-worth and self-esteem to group memberships. Thus, to some degree people's sense of their own worth is linked to the groups to which they belong. This aspect of self, as opposed to the personal self (unique individual traits), or the relational self (the self defined by dyadic relationships), will be the focus of this discussion. Sedikides and Brewer (2001) referred to the aspect of the self we consider as the collective self—the self linked to group memberships.

The group engagement model distinguishes among three aspects of group-linked or social identity: identification, pride, and respect. Identification reflects the degree to which people cognitively merge their sense of self and their evaluations of self-worth with their judgments of the characteristics and status of their groups. Pride reflects the person's evaluation of the status of their group. Respect reflects their evaluation of their status within the group. The group engagement model argues that each of these aspects of identity plays an important role in people's relationship to their group. This argument is shown in Figure 1. It focuses on what people get from groups in the form of acknowledgment and recognition of their identities.

As we have noted, the identity-based model of cooperation can be contrasted to a resource-based model of cooperation. Social psychologists have long recognized that people interact with others to exchange material resources. These material resources can vary widely—from things such as food to money—but regardless they share the characteristic of being material resources that people obtain through their cooperation with others (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Guided by social

exchange models, many social psychological discussions of people's relationships with groups have argued that this exchange of material resources is the fundamental reason that people engage in groups.

The social exchange perspective is the basis of several more recent resource-based models, including the investment model, which focuses on exit and loyalty to groups (Rusbult & Van Lange, 1996); realistic group conflict theory (Levine & Campbell, 1972); models of leader-member exchange (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975); models of in-role behavior (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986); goal theories of motivation (Locke & Latham, 1990); and sanction-based models of regulation (Nagin, 1998).

These resource-based perspectives predict that people's level of cooperation with a group will be shaped by the level of the material resources that they receive from that group and the sanctioning risks they face within the group. Thus, the willingness to voluntarily cooperate with the group by doing things that help the group flows from assessments of the desirability of the resources that are gained or lost by association with the group. In addition, loyalty to the group will also be shaped by the level of resources people are obtaining, relative to what they might obtain in another group (Rusbult & Van Lange, 1996). Though social exchange perspectives by and large emphasize the importance of material resources, such as food, money, security, and so on, it is important to note that some models acknowledge that individuals may develop a long-term perspective on resource exchange (Foa & Foa, 1974; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978).

The group engagement model proposes that the identity model prevails over the resource model in pre-

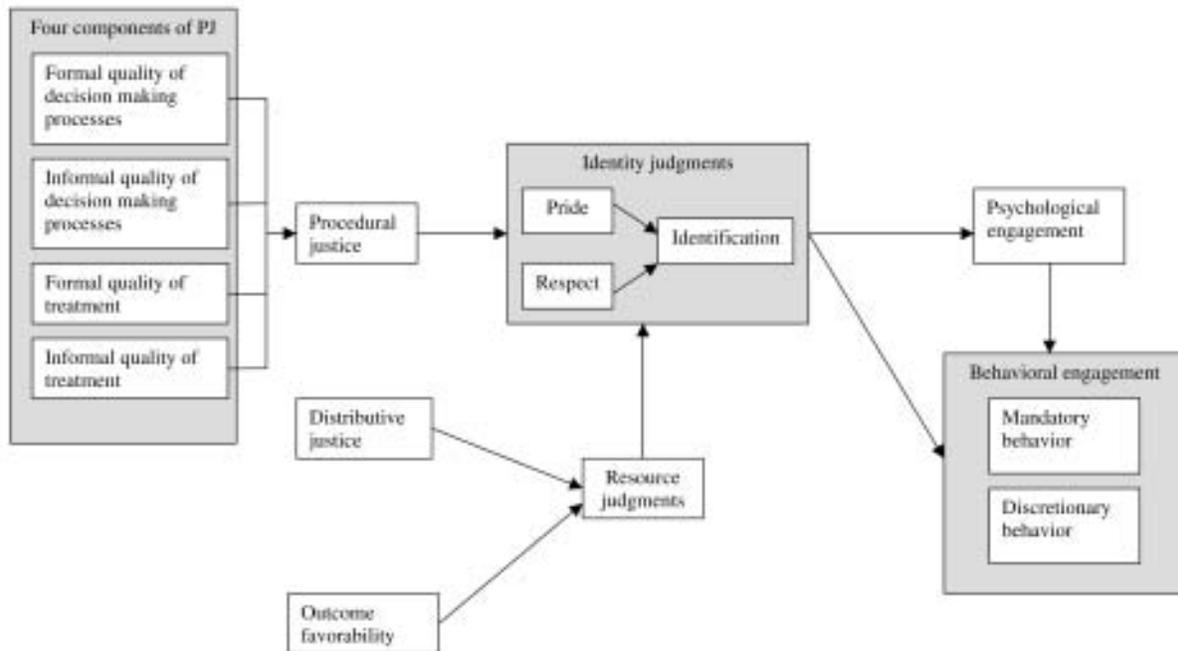


Figure 1. The group engagement model.

dicting engagement and cooperation. It argues that resource judgments do not directly shape engagement. This is not to say that the group engagement model argues that resource judgments have no influence on engagement. Instead, the model hypothesizes that resource judgments indirectly influence most forms of engagement by shaping identity. That is, to some degree, people evaluate their identity and status in a particular group by the level of the resources that they are receiving from that group. To the extent that having more resources in a group leads people to feel better about their identity with the group, they will engage themselves more in that group.

It is not obvious that people's engagement in groups would be the result of identity judgments. People could potentially consider a wide variety of aspects of their relationship to their group when they are evaluating the degree to which they want to engage themselves in a group. One thing that we might expect people to consider is reward level—that is, people might consider their salaries; the number of resources they are given to manage; and the size of their office, their car, or their home as key inputs into their judgments about how much to engage themselves in a group. The group engagement model argues that this is not the case and that such material rewards primarily influence engagement indirectly, by influencing identity status. The key argument of the group engagement model is that people's level of cooperation with groups is primarily shaped by the extent to which they identify with those groups. Cooperation is driven, in other words, by the motivation to create and maintain a favorable identity.

It seems counterintuitive to many people to argue that resources are not the primary factor that directly shapes engagement. Certainly, people can think of many examples from their everyday lives that seem to suggest a resource-based linkage with engagement. The seeming importance of resource concerns is also supported by some research findings. This may reflect evidence of the indirect connection between resource judgments and engagement of the type we have already outlined. If, as the group engagement model argues, resource judgments indirectly influence engagement, then studies that do not measure identity judgments will find a connection between resource judgments and engagement. However, the group engagement model suggests that, in a fully specified model, which includes both resource and identity judgments, the spurious connection between resource judgments and engagement will disappear (except for that between resources and mandatory cooperation), whereas a mediated connection will remain.

### **What Organizational Conditions Matter?**

The group engagement model also considers how the policies and practices of the group shape identity-based

and resource-based judgments. It is this aspect of the group engagement model that directly addresses issues of justice. The group engagement model argues that people are most strongly influenced by one aspect of the policies and practices of their group—the fairness of the group's procedures. This argument builds on the pervasive finding that procedural justice judgments have a strong and widespread influence on people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in group contexts (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997; Tyler & Smith, 1997).

In other research, we have argued that the procedural fairness that influences people in groups emanates from two different sources. First, people are influenced by their judgments about the fairness that is linked to the formal rules of the group. These rules can be enshrined in a constitution or mission statement or articulated by group leaders in speeches and written documents. Second, people are also influenced by their judgments about the fairness of the implementation of these rules and procedures by particular authorities (teachers, supervisors, parents), by group members (classmates, coworkers, siblings) with whom the individual has one-time or ongoing personal experiences, or both. Studies suggest that both formal rules and their implementation by particular authorities have an influence on people's reactions to groups (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Tyler & Blader, 2000).

Further, this research hypothesizes that, for both of these two sources of justice—what we term *formal* and *informal* sources—people react to two classes of procedural information. Those classes or categories of procedural elements are the quality of the decision making that occurs and the quality of treatment that people experience. Studies suggest that both issues of decision making and issues of quality of treatment influence people's procedural justice-related reactions in groups (Tyler & Blader, 2000). Note how the inclusion of quality of treatment issues is consistent with the trend in justice research that we discussed earlier.

By combining the distinction between formal and informal sources of justice with the distinction between decision making and treatment concerns, we arrive at a four-component model of procedural justice (Blader & Tyler, 2003a, 2003b; Tyler & Blader, 2000). The four-component model argues that each of the four components represents a distinct justice evaluation made by group members and, furthermore, that each has a unique influence in determining overall evaluations of procedural justice. Empirical research confirms these assertions (Blader & Tyler, 2003a; Tyler & Blader, 2000).

This work on the four-component model links to our work on the group engagement model through the hypothesis that these procedural elements are important because they shape people's identities. The group engagement model argues that, when people want to make identity assessments, one aspect of their lives that they

look to is the procedures of the groups to which they belong. The group engagement model argues that people focus heavily on issues of the procedural justice of their groups because they find procedural justice information to be the most useful identity-related information they can have about their groups. The four-component model more specifically stipulates what aspects of procedures people use to make judgments about their group-based identity.

As we have already noted, it is also possible to conceptualize a relationship between the person and the group that is centered around the exchange of resources. If this were the key motivation that shapes people's engagement in groups, we would expect that the element of group policies and practices that would most shape their engagement is their estimate of the degree to which the rules and policies of the group provide them with desirable resources. Such desirable resources may be conceptualized as either outcomes that are fair or that are favorable, and thus either of these two outcome judgments could affect group members' resource judgments. These resource judgments could, in turn, influence their engagement in the group. In the case of either outcome fairness or outcome favorability, it is the concern over the outcomes that are being received from the group that would be driving engagement in groups.

We therefore have stipulated separate antecedents of the two types of judgments that we recognized earlier as being potentially important in determining engagement in groups. That is, earlier we described both resource and identity-based antecedents of engagement in groups. Now we have identified the antecedent organizational conditions that can determine these two evaluations.

### What Is Identity?

As noted earlier, the group engagement model distinguishes among three aspects of identity: identification, pride, and respect (Tyler & Blader, 2000, 2001). One approach to identity is to define it as identification, or as the degree to which people merge their sense of self with the group—thinking of themselves and the group in similar terms and defining themselves in terms of their group membership. In Tyler and Blader (2000) we referred to this process of merger of self and group as psychological engagement in the group. It has also been referred to as identification with the group. The group engagement model hypothesizes that when people identify more strongly with a group, they will be more willing to act cooperatively in that group—investing their time and energy in working to see the group succeed.

A second way to conceptualize the role of identity in shaping engagement in groups is to consider the influence of status judgments. If groups serve an important function in the creation and maintenance of a posi-

tive identity, then group-related status judgments should shape engagement in the group. People should be more engaged in groups that have positive identity implications for the self, both because association with the group builds positive identity and because association is needed to maintain the viability of the group that sustains that identity.

We conceptualize status assessments as being reflected by two different concepts—pride and respect. Pride reflects judgments about the status of the group, also indexed by measures of group prestige (Mael & Asforth, 1992; Smidts, Pruyn, & van Riel, 2000). It expresses a person's view about the status of their group. People who belong to groups that they feel have high status feel good about themselves by virtue of their association with the group. These feelings stem primarily from noncomparative feelings of inclusion in a high status group, rather than from comparisons of one's group to other groups (Tyler & Blader, 2002).

Respect reflects judgments about one's status within the group. It expresses a person's view about their status in the eyes of other group members. Respect is also referred to as social reputation (Emler & Hopkins, 1990). Whereas social identity theory was originally focused on the status of groups (i.e., on intergroup phenomena), it is also recognized that people are influenced by their judgments of their status within groups (Doosje et al., 1999; Noel, Wann, & Branscombe, 1995).

Research supports the premise of the group engagement model by showing that identification, pride, and respect are connected to feelings of self-esteem and self-worth (Tyler & Blader, 2000; Tyler, DeGoeij, & Smith, 1996). This is consistent with the argument of the group engagement model that people use group identity-based judgments to evaluate themselves.

These three identity elements of the group engagement model—identification, pride, and respect—are each predicted to be related to engagement in groups. However, they are not equivalent constructs. In particular, status indicators (pride, respect) are hypothesized to influence identification, as shown in Figure 1. This relationship develops because people should be more highly motivated to merge their identity with a group when the group has high status (pride), when they feel that they have status in the group (respect), or both. Doing so ensures that their identification is with a group that makes them feel good about their social selves, with the obvious benefits that that entails for their overall sense of self. Pride and respect, in other words, engender identification with the group in people's motivated attempts to develop and maintain a positive social identity.

### The Group Engagement Model

To summarize, we have developed several arguments regarding the antecedents of group engagement.

First, we have outlined two potential proximal determinants of group members' engagement: (a) their identity judgments and (b) their resource judgments. Regarding these proximal determinants, we have argued that identity judgments are the central issue for predicting engagement and cooperation, and we have further argued that the influence of resource judgments is mediated by these identity concerns. Further, we described these identity judgments as composed of both status and identification concerns. Second, we have identified the organizational conditions that are linked to these two potential determinants of engagement. In the case of identity evaluations, we have argued that procedural justice is a key antecedent; group members' identities vis-à-vis the group are determined in large part by their evaluations of the fairness of the group's procedures. These process fairness evaluations, in turn, are composed of four distinct and important judgments. In the case of resource evaluations, we have argued that issues of both outcome fairness (i.e., distributive justice) and outcome favorability are key antecedents.

This set of hypotheses leads to an integrated model of what leads group members to engage in their groups—the group engagement model, presented in Figure 1. The overall group engagement model makes clear why people focus so heavily on whether or not their groups' procedures are fair. The procedural fairness judgment provides key information that shapes the degree to which people regard their group as having high status, regard themselves as having high status in their group, and identify with the group by merging their sense of self with the group. Procedural justice judgments are thus a key antecedent of identity assessments.

Identity assessments, in turn, are the key determinant of important psychological and behavioral connections to the group. The degree to which people identify with their group shapes the degree to which they develop supportive attitudes and values and the degree to which they engage themselves behaviorally in the group.

Outcome judgments, such as outcome fairness and outcome favorability, do influence evaluations of the resources received from the group. However, our group engagement model argues that these resource judgments do not directly influence attitudes, values, or behavioral engagement. Instead, it is argued that their influence on these important group outcomes is mediated by group members' identity judgments.

Are the proposals of the group engagement model valid? Tyler and Blader (2000) provided a preliminary test of the model using survey data from 404 employees drawn from a variety of work organizations. Using causal modeling, they tested several of the key hypotheses of the group engagement model and found support for all of them (see Tyler & Blader, 2000, p. 196). First, they found that identity judgments shaped attitudes, values, and cooperative behaviors. Consistent with the predictions of the model, they found a greater influence of

identity judgments on discretionary, as compared to mandatory, behavior. Second, resource judgments were found to influence attitudes, values, and discretionary cooperative behaviors indirectly, through identity judgments, but not directly. Third, procedural justice judgments were found to be the primary antecedent of identity judgments (Tyler & Blader, 2000, p. 136). The relationship between pride, respect, and identification was not examined in this initial test of the model, and thus awaits empirical confirmation.

### **Trends in Justice Research and the Group Engagement Model**

When we reconsider the trends in the justice literature that were discussed earlier, we find that they are consistent with the arguments of the group engagement model. First, research attention has shifted from an early exclusive focus on the influence of people's judgments about distributive justice to a more recent focus on the influence of both distributive and procedural justice judgments. This is consistent with the group engagement model's assertion that procedural justice judgments are central antecedents of how people develop their identities in relation to their groups. Second, within the study of procedural justice, research has shifted from exclusively defining procedural fairness by the quality of decision-making procedures to broader definitions of procedural fairness that also consider the quality of people's interpersonal treatment when they are interacting with others. This is consistent with the prominent role that treatment criteria of procedural justice play in the group engagement model, and in the clear linkage of this class of criteria with concerns about group-related identity.

Third, there has been a shift away from focusing primarily on negative reactions to experiences—anger, dissatisfaction, and negative behaviors ranging from rioting to sabotage (Crosby, 1976; Greenberg, 1990)—toward greater attention to positive attitudes and values and cooperative behaviors (Tyler & Blader, 2000). This is reflected in the breadth of attitudes and behaviors addressed by the group engagement model. Such a broader focus is consistent with the idea that justice models should and do provide a general framework within which we can understand people's connections to groups.

Thus, we argue that the underlying psychological dynamics suggested by the group engagement model can shed light on how and why justice research has evolved in many of the respects that it has. Whereas justice researchers' initial attention was focused on issues that reflected the context in which they were operating, empirical results suggested alternative approaches that provided relatively better insight into the issue of group engagement. Those empirical findings can be understood by considering the essential arguments put forth by the group engagement model.

## Implications of the Group Engagement Model

In the remainder of this article, we further explore several issues that flow from the theoretical framework put forth by the group engagement model. Specifically, we consider the fundamental issue of why procedural justice demonstrates the important links to identity that we predict and observe. Further, we consider some important distinctions between the two status judgments we have outlined (pride and respect). These issues provide further insight into the psychological underpinnings of the model, and specify important new directions for empirical research on the model.

### Procedural Justice as Identity Security

Why does procedural justice play such an important role in shaping identification with the group, which in turn links procedural justice with cooperation in the group? We propose that procedural justice provides *identity security*. A merger of the self with the group may provide people with support for positive feelings of self-worth and high self-esteem, through their connection to the group. By being members of a group, people can first use the group as a source of identity-relevant categories through which they define themselves. In addition, they can use the status of the group as a source of self-affirmation—gaining confidence in their own identity through their association with the group. Thus, people have a great deal to gain by their association with groups, at least if that association has favorable identity implications.

Although using a group to determine one's identity can facilitate positive feelings of self-worth and self-esteem, it also contains risks. People can receive favorable identity-relevant information, but they can also have their identities damaged when they receive negative feedback from the group. So, for example, a person who identifies more strongly with a group is more psychologically damaged when they see that the group operates in negative ways (Brockner, Tyler, & Cooper-Schneider, 1992). Opening one's self up to the group creates vulnerabilities and opens up the possibility of receiving negative feedback that damages one's identity. People are sensitive to the potential pitfalls of identification with groups that provide them with negative status information. Status evaluations (pride, respect) positively predict identification with the group, and thus the more favorable these status evaluations, the stronger people's level of identification with the group.

Whereas the risk of receiving damaging information exists for everyone, it is especially strong for those members of groups who are vulnerable. People are more vulnerable when their status in the group is unclear, when it is unclear whether they are included in the group (Tyler & Lind, 1990), or both. When asso-

ciation with a group is less unclear but instead clearly negative, deleterious consequences are even more likely. For instance, people who are members of certain stigmatized demographic groups often have negative stereotypes applied to them, making them feel low status within the broader superordinate groups of which they are also members. These stereotypes can have a serious impact on these individuals. Research in achievement settings, for example, demonstrates that the behavior of people who are potentially vulnerable to stereotype application is changed, with people reluctant to engage themselves psychologically and behaviorally in tasks that might result in identity damaging feedback linked to confirming negative subgroup stereotypes (Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002).

The degree to which people identify reflects their effort to balance the potential identity gains associated with merging their identities with a group against the potential risks of that same merger of the self and the group. The group engagement model argues that, to the degree that people feel that the group makes decisions via fair procedures, they are more likely to feel that their identity can be safely and securely merged with that of the group. Procedural justice, in other words, appears to allay people's concerns that group membership will result in negative consequences for the self; it provides them with a sense of identity security. The existence of such security leads people to feel comfortable engaging psychologically and behaviorally in groups.

This argument only raises a more fundamental question, however. Why does procedural justice provide identity security? Because each of the two functions of procedures—quality of decision making and quality of interpersonal treatment—contributes to people's assessment that it is safe for them to merge their identity with their group. Consider the quality of the decision making in the group. If a group makes decisions unfairly (i.e., inconsistently, based on biases or personal opinions instead of facts), then there is a risk that stereotypes or personal prejudices might potentially be applied to group members that belong to particular subgroups. Experiencing stereotyping and prejudice within the groups that people belong to is damaging to their sense of self, which may in turn lead them to maintain a psychological distance between their identity and group membership. Fair procedures reassure people that stereotypes are not and will not be applied. Neutrality, in other words, encourages confidence in the security of including the group in one's sense of self, leading people to be more willing to engage in a group.

To understand how this argument differs from a social exchange perspective, consider the exchange-based procedural justice model proposed by Thibaut and Walker (1975). This model argues that people's motivation in disputes with others is to gain fair outcomes—that is, the resources they deserve.

They value the opportunity to present evidence (process control) because it allows them to shape the outcome of a third parties' decisions (decision control), leading that third party to make a decision consistent with principles of distributive justice. Hence, the goal of a procedure is to provide *outcome security* by producing a fair distribution of resources. The group engagement model is fundamentally different; it proposes that it is identity security that is key.

An example of the importance of fair decision-making procedures is provided by judgments about racial profiling (Tyler & Wakslak, 2002). When people are stopped by the police, they must infer whether they are being stigmatized by legal authorities via the application of a negative group stereotype to them based not on what they are doing, but on their race, gender, or age. If they are, this behavior by group authorities carries negative identity implications, raising questions about whether they are included in the rights accorded to members of the superordinate group (i.e., the rights accorded to group members in good standing). What reassures people that profiling is not occurring, so that the ticket they have received does not reflect negatively on their social status? If people infer that the authorities are making their decisions fairly, they are less likely to say that they are being profiled. These inferences and the identity implications that flow from them may have large consequences on these group members' attitudes, values, and cooperation with the superordinate group.

The second aspect of procedural justice is the quality of the treatment that a person experiences when dealing with others. This aspect of procedural justice feeds directly into people's identity judgments, because treatment with dignity and politeness, as well as the consideration of one's needs and concerns, are also aspects of interpersonal experience that communicate that one is valued by others. Again using the example of racial profiling, studies suggest that people are less likely to think that they have been profiled when they are treated politely and with dignity, when they feel that their needs and concerns are recognized, and when they feel that their rights are acknowledged. People infer that police officers who treat them politely and with respect are affirming their status rather than undermining or raising questions about it. Hence, quality of treatment is also associated with whether people feel that stereotypes are being applied. In addition, evaluations that the treatment experienced in the group context is fair reassures people that they will receive treatment that affirms their status well into the future of their group membership. This also reassures people's sense of identity security.

The example of racial profiling illustrates the risks a person undertakes when merging one's sense of self into a group. If people are drawing their sense of self from a superordinate group membership, then demeaning and disrespectful treatment from that superordinate

group will undermine their feelings of favorable self-esteem and self-worth. It will communicate marginality and exclusion from important protections that are extended to most other group members—for example, “freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure.” Racial profiling illustrates the reality that group members are not able to prevent stereotype application in all settings. People are not able to avoid being in situations in which they must contend with the police, the courts, and other group authorities (Lipsky, 1980).

The group engagement model argues that each of these two aspects of the procedural justice experienced in a group carries important identity information to the group member, with the result that procedural justice judgments are especially important to people when they are evaluating groups. Procedural justice is a particularly important source of this information, we argue, because the phenomena of process fairness provides people with reassurance that they can safely draw a significant portion of their sense of self from the group. Procedures communicate information that people care about in evaluating their group memberships, and furthermore allow them to make inferences about the nature of their future connection to the group. Such inferences are important for determining their engagement in the group.

### **Pride Versus Respect**

This discussion has treated pride and respect as distinct but related aspects of people's status judgments. However, it is possible to distinguish between these two aspects of status and make distinct predictions about them. In particular, pride reflects the categorical self, whereas respect reflects the reputational self (Tyler & Smith, 1999). Thus, these two aspects of status speak to different psychological drives: the drive to have a positive social identity and the drive to have a positive personal identity.

The categorical self reflects a focus on category attributes and in particular on the status of the group—what is good or bad about the group, its values, its identity, and so on. It diminishes distinctions among group members and focuses on common attributes. Hence, the categorical self is created from prototypical elements of the group. This focus leads to a motivation to be loyal to the group, its values, its rules, and its authorities. Hence, we predict it will be linked to public behaviors that display loyalty. We hypothesize that it will lead to increased attention to the group and group values, leading to conformity and uniformity of behavior among group members.

The reputational self is based on a focus on the person within the group. People's interest in how others in the group view them leads to attention to their unique and valuable attributes, as those attributes are identified by them and by others in the group. The

reputational self reflects our view of ourselves in the eyes of others. This focus leads to unique and creative actions on the part of group members, actions designed to create reputational capital by enhancing their favorable image among members of the group. People who feel respected by others in their groups are predicted to become highly committed to the group and voluntarily motivated to act in ways that make use of distinctive qualities and abilities.

The group engagement model thus suggests that pride will be particularly linked to mandatory–required behavior, whereas respect will be linked especially strongly to discretionary–voluntary behavior. These influences are expected in addition to the indirect influence that pride and respect have via identification. This prediction grows out of the recognition that mandatory behaviors will likely be highly prototypical group behaviors, since they are identified and stipulated by the group as desirable. Discretionary behaviors, on the other hand, originate with the individual and are thus more idiosyncratic in nature, and should thus be related to that aspect of the self that strives to express and protect one’s individuality. The model makes the additional predictions that decision making will be a particularly important antecedent of pride and quality of treatment of respect. These predictions, of course, are in need of empirical testing.

### Summary

Either an identity or a resource model could potentially explain people’s level of engagement in groups. However, the group engagement model suggests that it is identity motivations that are key to engagement. Hence, this highlights the need to understand what shapes people’s identities. The group engagement model argues that it is procedural justice that is central to how and whether people construct their group-related identities.

These arguments of the group engagement model make clear why justice research has shifted from a focus on distributive justice to a focus on procedural justice and, within procedural justice, from a focus on decision making to a focus on both decision making and quality of treatment. These shifts have occurred because both assessments of the quality of decision making and assessments of the quality of treatment provide people with the most useful information in constructing and maintaining their identities.

Compelling evidence of this centrality of procedural issues to identity is provided by the importance accorded to the quality of treatment people experience when dealing with others. Quality of treatment provides little information about the favorability or fairness of the outcomes being received, yet it is consistently found to be a key input into procedural fairness judgments and an

important factor shaping engagement in the group. It is difficult to understand this centrality without according identity an important role in mediating the impact of procedural justice on engagement. Although we argue that decision-making processes are also evaluated from an identity perspective, their linkages to allocations themselves makes them less conclusive indicators of the importance of identity issues.

By reviewing research on social justice from the perspective of the theoretical framework represented by the group engagement model, we have attempted to provide a coherent way of understanding the changes that have occurred within the field over the last several decades. We believe that this framework suggests that the findings of social justice research speak to social psychology more broadly. That is, the core implication of the group engagement model about what matters to people in social contexts has relevance not only to social justice research, but to work on group dynamics and social psychology as a field.

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